Storm Conor to follow Storm Barbara

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The second named storm of the season, Storm Barbara, which brought strong winds and squally rain to the UK yesterday, is being followed by Storm Conor on Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

In the wake of Storm Barbara winds have decreased, though during Christmas Eve will remain strong in the far north of Scotland, with gusts to around 70 mph in Shetland. Yellow wind warnings are in place for parts of northern Scotland and the Northern Isles. Wintry showers are easing.

National Severe Weather Warnings - including an Amber wind warning for the northern tip of mainland Scotland and the Northern Isles - are in place for northern parts of the UK for Christmas Day and Boxing Day as a new low pressure system, named Conor, passes to the north of the country bringing more strong winds.

Eddy Carroll Chief Meteorologist said: “Another Atlantic low pressure system will be passing well to the north of the UK on Christmas Day bringing fairly strong winds to the north of Scotland, and local effects also generating strong winds east of the Pennines. The storm system will extend more significantly strong winds southwards into the far north on Boxing Day bringing the risk of gusts of more than 80 mph and the potential for some disruption to power supplies and travel, and possibly structural damage. In contrast to Christmas Eve, temperatures are expected to be exceptionally mild on Christmas day.”

Whatever your plans over the next few days it's worthwhile staying up to date with the latest Met Office forecasts, which is easy to do on our app.

Storm Conor is expected to bring gusts of 50 to 60 mph over Northern Ireland and northern England and up to 70 mph to parts of Scotland on Christmas Day. The greatest impacts are expected to be over the Northern Isles on Boxing Day where the potential for gusts in excess of 80 mph enhances the risk of disruption to power supplies, with large waves affecting coastal areas.

Scottish Transport Minister Humza Yousaf said: “Our transport operators and trunk road operating companies are working hard to keep services and roads running, safety has to be our top priority so we are seeing delays and cancellations to flights and ferries. There are some alterations to train timetables with full details on the Scotrail website.

“We would urge everyone to check the latest sources of information before they travel and keep in mind that the situation can change quickly. They should leave plenty time to get to where they need to be and the transport operators are doing what they can to help people arrive at their destinations and get any last minute festive shopping done safely.

“We shall be continuing to monitor the situation over the festive period including Christmas Eve, Christmas Day and Boxing Day to make sure that the most reliable and relevant information is being communicated to people as early as possible.”

From Tuesday 27th December onwards indications are that high pressure will once again start to dominate our weather bringing more settled weather with the risk of overnight fog for southern areas while parts of the north remain blustery.

Keep up to date with the weather using our forecast pages and by following us on Twitter and Facebook, as well as using our new mobile app which is available for iPhone from the App store and for Android from the Google Play store. Search for "Met Office" in store.

Why has the weather changed?

Recent conditions in North America – with cold Arctic air sinking far southwards – has brought unusually cold weather to parts of the continent. This cold air encounters relatively warm air in the western Atlantic. This creates a strong temperature gradient along the boundary between the two air masses which will strengthen the jet stream – a high-altitude fast-flowing wind which often brings low-pressure systems and storms to our shores. As the jet stream then comes east across the Atlantic, it drives areas of low pressure towards the UK, with associated spells of strong winds and rain.

Storm Conor will deepen rapidly as it approaches the UK. This process is known as rapid or explosive cyclogenesis and leads to the formation of what is commonly called a weather ‘bomb’. A 'weather bomb' is defined as an intense low pressure system with a central pressure that falls 24 millibars in a 24-hour period, leading to more vigorous winds. This phenomenon is fairly common during the winter when the rapid deepening usually happens over the Atlantic.

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